

last five times in the last 2 years would have accomplished some of these considerations for our men and women in uniform.

I just want to mention very quickly that this year, and I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), my bill dealt with removing the death gratuity 2 years ago; but it was \$6,000. That was the cap on the death gratuity amount. I am glad that the McGovern bill and the Renzi bill both move it up to \$12,000. It is what it should be. But for me, when I started this effort 2 years ago, I say to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS), it dealt with eliminating the death gratuity tax.

So again I want to say that I am pleased tonight that we are all, both Republican and Democrat, believing that the military tax fairness bill that has been sent over a few months ago has not been taken up by the Senate side, and I do not know the status on this side of a second bill.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, first I want to commend the gentleman. He has been courageous in standing up for military families and veterans, one of only two Republicans to sign the discharge petition on concurrent receipt.

The gentleman was mistaken in that the Senate has taken no action on the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act. They passed that unanimously 97 to 0 in March, 7 months ago. It has been sitting here at the Speaker's desk, and if the House Republican leadership would bring it to the floor tomorrow, we could pass it unanimously. Apparently, what they object to in passing the bill is closing the Benedict Arnold tax loophole.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for correcting me. I was mistaken about the Senate's action and I stand corrected. I will say, and then I will yield back the balance of my time, because I think even though we all have our reasons for feeling that some action has not been taken and possibly, I will say this, that I believe that we all, in a bipartisan way, support our men and women in uniform, we support their families, and we want to make sure that those who have given their lives for this country that the families are adequately compensated; not that there is enough, quite frankly, to pay those who have given their lives for this country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from New York.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) and the good work they have done. I have come to the House floor night after night since July sharing concerns about the treatment of our men and women in uniform in Iraq, concerns about the basis of our Iraq policy, concerns about the \$87 billion we are spending in Iraq, in addition to the \$1 billion a week we have already been spending; about the corruption and the ineptness of the Bush administration and their all-too-often focusing more on the private contractors like Halliburton and Bechtel than they have on the safety of our armed services and our troops.

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And as a result, Mr. Speaker, I have shared these from my constituents night after night since July about these issues. I would like to do that again this evening.

Paula from Akron, Ohio, writes, "We need to be concerned with our troubled economy at home. This country doesn't have \$87 billion to send overseas when we have an education system that is in shambles and millions out of work."

Cory of Copley, Ohio, writes, "Please do not give the administration another blank check so they can continue their oil wars. Tell them to pull out of Iraq and let the U.N. take control. The administration has lied to the country. Please do your part in returning our country to the people."

I think Cory was talking about some of the statements from some of the top leaders in this country about weapons of mass destruction and other issues which have proven to be not true.

Karen of Broadview Heights writes, "We have been way too patient with men who clearly do not know what they are doing and who do not care how much of the taxpayers' money they spend to do it."

Michael of Strongsville writes, "I think it is either irresponsible or insane, or perhaps both, to have huge tax cuts at the same time we are spending huge amounts for war." What Michael is referring to is that this Congress and the President have passed a tax cut where the average millionaire gets a \$93,000 tax cut while half of the people in my State got literally zero dollars in

a tax cut. "I hope our legislative branch of government," Michael writes, "deliberates long and hard before coughing up another \$87 billion."

Colette of Strongsville writes, "To give them \$73 billion more to continue their real aim, contracts for Halliburton, Bechtel, and others in corporate America, would be a crime against the people in the United States who now reel with economic deterioration at home. It is time to hold those accountable who led us into such a dark place in our Nation's history." What Colette is talking about, Mr. Speaker, is that we spend a billion a week today, before the \$87 billion appropriation, a billion dollars a week in Iraq today.

The President has by and large privatized the military in the sense that one-third of that billion now goes to private contractors, Halliburton, Bechtel, other major companies, all of those companies are major contributors to the President, to his campaign. The President has raised almost \$100 million already. Much of it comes from these companies.

I would add too that Halliburton, the company where Vice President CHENEY, before Governor Bush tapped him as his running mate, Vice President CHENEY was CEO of this company. He still is receiving \$13,000 a month from Halliburton while Halliburton is getting, literally, hundreds of millions of dollars in unbid contracts.

So what we see, Mr. Speaker, and what Colette obviously is upset about, is we are privatizing, in many ways, much of the military, \$300 million a week going to these private companies in unbid contracts, and those companies are still paying, in one case, the Vice President of the United States \$13,000 a month.

Sandy of Hinckley, Ohio, writes, "It is of extreme importance for the future of this country to hold President Bush accountable. We lost a great deal in human life and money for claims that even President Bush cannot now and does not now defend."

Vera of Strongsville writes, "I want my tax dollars rebuilding us, not Iraq or any other country. \$87 billion would go a long way here in the United States. Secretary Rumsfeld and his team need to be replaced with some honest and caring people who will tell the truth and do the best things for the Iraqi people and will bring our troops home safely."

Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago when the \$87 billion was approved by this body, I had an amendment that required that all U.S. companies which relocated their headquarters to an offshore tax haven would be ineligible for any government contracts. In other words, if a company moved offshore to avoid taxes, they could no longer get any government contracts to do work in Iraq.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration opposed that amendment. The Republican leadership in this House